

**Colusa Subreach Planning Project Advisory Workgroup  
Draft Meeting Summary  
October 15, 2007, 10:00AM - 2:00PM  
Colusa Industrial Properties  
Colusa, CA**

**Summary prepared by Carolyn Penny, Facilitator, Common Ground: Center for  
Cooperative Solutions with assistance from Ellen Gentry, Sacramento River  
Conservation Area Forum**

***Note: The next AW meeting is scheduled for December 10, 2007 from 10 a.m. to 4p.m.,  
at Colusa Industrial Properties. The meeting time is extended to allow for multiple  
significant agenda items.***

**Present:**

**AW:** Beverley Anderson-Abbs, Annalena Bronson, Woody Elliot, John Garner, and Greg Golet (alternate for Dawit Zeleke)

**Staff:** Ellen Gentry (SRCAF), Facilitator Carolyn Penny (Common Ground), Project Manager Gregg Werner (TNC)

**Guests:** Josh Brown (SRCAF), Ladybug Doherty (Reclamation Board), Ashley Indrieri (FWA), Butch Hodgkins (Reclamation Board)

**Meeting Objectives:**

- To gain an update on subreach planning-related activities;
- To learn about and discuss the pest species/regulatory effects analysis results;
- To receive an update on and discuss the phase 2 hydraulic analysis;
- To understand the DWR proposal for restoration of the Colusa SRA tract;
- To receive an update on the environmental assessment contract and timeline; and
- To plan for a community information session about the subreach.

**Agenda:**

<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Approx. Start Time</u>	<u>Lead Person</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
1.	10:00	Carolyn Penny, Facilitator	Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review, June Meeting Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introductions. Approve agenda. Approve June meeting summary.</li></ul>
2.	10:10	Gregg Werner, Bev Anderson-Abbs, All AW Members	Brief Updates on Larger Context of Subreach Planning-Related Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Share a sense of the larger context for conservation-related activities.</li></ul>
3.	10:25	Greg Golet, All AW Members	Pest and Regulatory Effects Analysis Presentation Progress Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand and discuss the analysis results.</li></ul>

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4.	11:00	Public	Public Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive comment.</li> </ul>
5.	11:15	Gregg Werner, All AW Members	Environmental Assessment Contract and Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the arrangements for the environmental assessment process.</li> </ul>
	11:40	Gregg Werner All AW Members	Department of Water Resources Restoration Proposal for the Colusa SRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the proposal for restoration of the tract</li> </ul>
6.	12:00		Lunch and Break	
7.	12:30	Gregg Werner All AW Members	Phase 2 Hydraulic Analysis Update and Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive Phase 2 Hydraulic Analysis update and gain a sense of timeline through the final report.</li> </ul>
8.	1:00	Public	Public Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive comment.</li> </ul>
9.	1:15	Gregg Werner, All AW Members	Community Information Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for the “know your river” community information session including date, time, partners, and location.</li> </ul>
10.	1:45	Gregg Werner, All AW Members	Next Meeting Dates, Next Agenda, and Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shape next agenda and clarify interim steps.</li> </ul>
11.	2:00		Adjourn	

### **Review of June Meeting Summary**

The June meeting summary was accepted as written.

### **Brief Updates on Larger Context of Subreach Planning-Related Activities**

Gregg Werner gave an update on the boat ramp project. The money for the design is included in the budget signed by Governor Schwarzenegger. The Department of Boating and Waterways is asking for completion of the management agreement for the project before design funds are released. The project is on city property and the City of Colusa is managing construction. Details will take some time and may delay start of the design. A meeting is scheduled between State Parks staff and the City to move the project forward.

DWR is moving ahead on planning to fund the restoration of the Ward tract as mitigation for the clearing of Tisdale Bypass.

DWR is also taking a comprehensive look at the 3Bs overflow north of Colusa Subreach. M&T and Goose Lake overflows have set elevations. Elevation looks to be lower at the 3Bs natural overflow, allowing water through the overflow earlier during a flood. Discussion revolves around whether there should be some sort of armored road construction. Butte County has expressed concern. DWR is starting meetings to explore the issues.

Gregg reported on the COE Levee Vegetation Symposium. COE policy has been that levees should have no vegetation other than grass. If, however, all vegetation is taken off, it would be cost-prohibitive. There is some indication now that vegetation is reducing erosion on levees. Scientific information is being gathered and the COE is working on a compromise. Ladybug added that subsequent meetings are being held to continue the discussion on levee vegetation and noted that restoration has been done in some areas. Annalena added that levee safety is of real importance along with protecting endangered species. Beverley noted that a letter distributed by the COE concerning the policy is available on the SRCAF website at [www.sacramentoriver.org](http://www.sacramentoriver.org).

Annalena reported the Governor signed the flood bill and that there will be a Reclamation Board change by December 31, 2007. Board members will now be paid \$39,000 annually. Butch Hodgkins added that as of January 1, 2008 evidentiary hearings will be required and that all permits will have to go through evidentiary hearings. Regulations will be in place ASAP. The impact of the changes will need some time to be sorted out in terms of Reclamation Board membership, procedures, and regulations.

### **Pest and Regulatory Effects Analysis Presentation Progress Report**

Greg Golet gave a PowerPoint presentation of the two main areas combined and selected by the AW for investigation by EDAW re: increased regulatory effects and increased pest effects. An External Expert Panel was consulted about crop types, pest species and laws or regulations of concern near restoration sites. Within the Subreach, 414 acres have been proposed for restoration from fallow or agricultural land to riparian habitat within flood control levees. The goals of the pest effects study included: identify differences in effects between farms adjacent to habitat vs. those adjacent to other farms, identify changes in effects resulting from past restoration, assess potential effects of proposed restoration projects and identify solutions to reduce any effects on agriculture. Environmental and species protection laws and regulations were considered. There is potential for agricultural operations to result in “take” of legally protected resources.

Of 14 laws and regulations studied, only three laws have potential to have a more restrictive impact as a result of Subreach riparian restoration: ESA, CESA and fully protected species provisions of DFG. Of 14 species known, or with potential to occur in the subreach, ten are unlikely to have related increased regulatory constraints; constraints may increase for four species. For bird species, potential constraints are limited to activities involving removal of nest trees with chicks. VELB potential constraints are limited to activities less than or equal to 100 ft. of elderberry shrubs with stems of greater than or equal to one inch ground level diameter that could result in take of such shrubs.

The pest effects summary included high priority crops in the Colusa Subreach. Priority pest species included vertebrate pests, insects and other invertebrates. Many pest species identified as high/medium priority are not expected to increase in population; some species may decrease. Of the species that have potential to increase in either population or damage, the change is expected to be small because riparian habitat acreage will increase by less than 8%. A high percentage of the perimeter of proposed restoration areas border either existing riparian habitat or levees. Farms that adjoin proposed restoration sites will undergo small changes depending on how much of their borders adjoin habitat.

Twelve pest species are not expected to change in population size or crop damage with riparian restoration. Pests that may increase in population and crop damage with riparian restoration include the CA ground squirrel, CA vole, and the Lygus bug; however most of these effects are expected to be transitory. In particular, aquatic species such as beaver are not expected to change because of the restriction in dispersal to waterways, which are a relatively long distance from farms adjoining proposed restoration sites.

Potential solutions for increased regulatory constraints with restoration are included in the design. Potential solutions for increased pest damage to crops with restoration include pest prevention, pest abatement and coordination with neighboring property owners.

### **Discussion and Public Comment**

In discussion, John suggested that it would be useful to include in the report a process to address any problems that arise during or after restoration. Ashley suggested that such a process needs to allow for changes in agency personnel or landowners over time. Gregg added that there could be a written Memorandum of Agreement with the landowner and that the owning/managing agencies should be part of that agreement.

John inquired whether EDAW found turkeys or pigs among the pest species. Greg responded that neither turkeys nor pigs were listed by the AW as species to be included. Butch asked whether it would be possible for agency landowners and private landowners to split the cost of fencing to handle the deer threat. Gregg responded that such fencing would not be an option within the levee because a fence would act as a barrier and catch debris. John noted that the deer are already a predation problem; restoration may not increase the problem.

Ashley asked whether and how the County had been included in the conversations about pest and regulatory impacts. Gregg responded that there is a consultation relationship with the County in addition to the required notices of restoration projects. In response to Ashley's question about which agencies will be long-term owners of the restoration sites, Gregg stated that California Department of Parks and Recreation, DWR, and DFG (owns 3 sites; may own 3 more) are the agency recreation site landowners.

The draft report will be sent out prior to the next CSP AW meeting. EDAW will present results in detail at that meeting. Comments and feedback will be incorporated in the final document.

### **Environmental Assessment Contract and Timeline**

With DFG as lead agency, an environmental assessment will be conducted for all of the restoration properties other than the Ward property. The environmental assessment is expected to include a

significant amount of information and may result in a mitigated negative declaration. North State Resources, Inc., of Redding will serve as the contractor, with the timeline of a draft in January 2008, to be followed by a 30-day comment period. Several Responsible Agencies (e.g., Wildlife Conservation Board, Parks and Recreation) under CEQA will also utilize the document. The grant ends in April, but may be extended to July 1, 2008.

In discussion, Butch asked whether the initial studies would be offered for comment. Gregg responded that the assessment would be open for review at a preliminary stage. In response to Annalena's question about scoping meetings, Gregg noted that the report will include issues and information from the hydraulic analysis and pest/regulatory effects analyses. He would like to hear AW suggestions about any additional meetings that should be held.

### **DWR Restoration Proposal for the Colusa SRA**

Gregg gave a PowerPoint presentation on the proposal for the Ward Tract. The 238 acres was purchased by TNC with the intent for wildlife habitat restoration and public recreation. The 2007 master plan was completed with public input. The Ward tract was donated to the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) by TNC and has since been investigated to meet DWR's mitigation needs for the Tisdale Bypass clearance project.

DWR plans include: complete an environmental assessment, present proposal at SRCAF TAC meeting November 6 and SRCAF Board meeting December 6, present proposal at public information meeting, request Reclamation Board approval in December, complete planning with DRP and TNC and implement restoration in 2008-9.

John asked whether DWR's involvement in Ward restoration frees budget for other properties. Gregg responded that the AW's mission and budget is focused on planning and that DWR is funding restoration not included in that budget. He added that the next AW meeting would include an update on its timeline, with its funding grant currently scheduled to end April 2008.

### **Phase 2 Hydraulic Analysis Update and Timeline**

The purpose of the Hydraulic Analysis is to analyze existing floodway capacity and analyze the effects of restoration projects. Analysis methods include: direct comparison of existing thalweg data with an overlay plot, field inventory of large woody debris (LWD) with subsequent modeling of effects and two dimensional hydraulic modeling. The model was reviewed by Fran Borcalli, DWR staff and DWR in consultation with the Reclamation Board.

Model outputs will include: surface elevation of the design flow to identify changes in elevation that will result from restoration projects, surface elevation compared to the design flow elevation; and velocity differential resulting from restoration including potential effects on levees or critical erosion locations and potential erosion effects on adjoining lands. Existing conditions model results include water surface elevation for the design flow (160,000 cfs at Butte City) compared to the 1957 Design Flow.

Remaining work includes: analyze the effects of LWD, analyze effects of restoration planting on seepage through the levees, document the hydraulic analysis in a final report, present initial report/existing conditions at a public meeting and present final report to Hydraulic Analysis Subgroup, AW and at a public meeting if desired.

### **Public Comment**

In response to Ashley's inquiries, Gregg responded that the modeling is based on mature restoration plantings as represented in the preliminary restoration plans and that Fran Borcalli's peer review was based on his conversations with Ayres and his review of the study. Gregg also indicated, in response to Ladybug's inquiry, that the model includes adjoining properties. Woody asked what could be done if Large Woody Debris has a significant detrimental effect. Gregg indicated that, in that case, the analysis would need to note the consequences of removal.

### **Community Information Session**

A handout was distributed by Gregg covering possible arrangements for a public information meeting. After discussion, the AW decided that the meeting will be scheduled for November 15, 6:30PM-8:30PM, in the large meeting room at Colusa Indian Community Center. Gregg will make arrangements for the meeting space. The expected participants include landowners, agency personnel, elected officials, people from the CSP mailing list and local residents. The group suggested that John would be an appropriate person to welcome all participants if he were willing. The AW also suggested that publicity for the meeting could be framed according to the importance of the studies for the local residents – "how does it affect me?"

Butch suggested this meeting be the first of two meetings and include an explanation of the model of existing hydraulic conditions and the CEQA checklist. The second meeting would focus on the upcoming hydraulic analysis results; he indicated that Tom Smith could be involved in that discussion as long as he has advance notification in order to prepare. Butch (California Central Valley Flood Control Association; NACWA) and Ashley (Lions Club; Rotary Club; Chamber of Commerce) suggested entities to include on the meeting announcement mailing list.

### **Next Meeting Date**

The next CSP AW Meeting was scheduled for December 10, 10:00AM-4:00PM, at Colusa Industrial Properties. Due to the specific agenda items, the AW expects to include other interested parties in discussion of several agenda items.

### **Next Agenda**

- Draft Hydraulic Analysis Report
- Review outline of subreach planning report, AW timeline, and other miscellaneous items
- Regulatory/Pest Effects Report
- Wrap-Up

### **Interim Steps**

- DWR, TNC, SRCAF, DPR will create and disseminate the community meeting agenda and press release by 11/1/07.
- Gregg will make a presentation to the SRCAF Board with an AW update on 12/6/07.
- AW members can expect to receive the draft pest/regulatory effects report and hydraulic analysis phase 2 report by mail by 12/3/07 from TNC.